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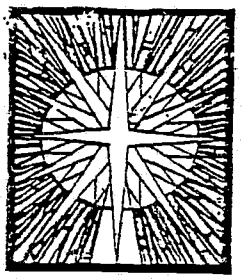

PEOPLES TEMPLE

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Jim Jones,
Pastor

P.O. Box 15023
San Francisco, CA. 94115

December 16, 1977

President Jimmy Carter
The White House
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C.

"For I was an hungered
and ye gave me meat:
I was thirsty
and ye gave me drink;
I was a stranger
and ye took me in;
Naked, and ye clothed me;
I was sick and ye visited me;
I was in prison,
and ye came unto me.

"Then shall the righteous
Answer him, saying,
When saw we thee an hungered
And fed thee?
Or thirsty,
And gave thee drink?
When saw we thee a stranger
And took thee in?
Or naked, and clothed thee
Or when saw we thee sick?
Or in prison,
And came unto thee?

"Verily I say unto you,
Inasmuch as ye have done it
Unto one of the least of these...
...Ye have done it unto me"

Matthew 25:35-40

Dear President Carter:

I am writing on behalf of the membership of the Peoples Temple Christian Church, concerning what appears to be a flagrant attempt to quash the economic security of hundreds of elderly and disabled American citizens presently residing at our agricultural mission in Guyana, South America. These persons are presently facing denial of monies rightfully due to them under U.S. law. An official Postal Service memo, dated September 9, 1977, and circulated throughout San Francisco branch post offices, reads as follows:

> "This is to advise you that the Department of H.E.W. (Social Security Administration) has instructed us to return all SSI (gold checks) and Social Security (green) to them where we have a forwarding order for Guyana. Georgetown, Guyana, South America." (We have been widely-publicized in San Francisco as having moved close to a thousand members to Guyana.)

As you undoubtedly know, these social security checks are permanent pensions to which U.S. citizens are entitled almost anywhere in the world, including Guyana. It is a great source of consternation to these persons who have worked hard all their lives for such benefits, to now face deliberate interruption of their checks. They were moreover promised an official transfer of their monies by SSA, and secure forwarding of their checks in the interim by both SSA and the Postal Service. This is only one of many such hardships we have had to endure in recent months.

As you perhaps recall, our Pastor, the Reverend Jim Jones, is the minister of the interracial church of many thousands, who had the opportunity to dine personally with Mrs. Carter when she was on the San Francisco campaign trail in the Fall a year ago. We have certainly not suffered disappointment on the part of the Carter Administration since that time, to the contrary, but we are well aware of the overwhelming complexities of government bureaucracy. For that reason, we are providing you with the following in the way of background, to assist your staff in discerning what might be behind this present issue with H.E.W. and the Postal Service, so as to further an expeditious resolution:

The Peoples Temple has been established within the United States for over 25 years with a virtually incomparable record of human service and Christian activist concern. Not only is the Temple recognized nationwide for providing financial, material, medical, educational, and legal security for countless of its members of every race, age, sex, and economic strata for many, many years, eliminating the need for Welfare in many instances; but it has conducted extensive outreach to support minority and disadvantaged segments of the society (and bring them into the mainstream); reporters struggling to defend a free press; the unemployed; the ghettoized; drug culture youth; the elderly; neglected children. In the spirit of vigilant concern that America must always remain free, we have also consistently focussed upon the abuse of human rights in all walks of life, and fully support your efforts to that end.

We have also gone to lengths to expose what we consider dangerous Nazi elements still operative within our society, and the activities of the Ku Klux Klan. We have been greatly concerned about the encroachment of repressive legislation, and our support of press freedom for "The Fresno Four" newsmen was acclaimed as far away as the New York Times.

For the many courageous, and sometimes unpopular stands taken by our Pastor and church, we have suffered much persecution, such as threats, hate calls, arson, bombing attempts, and outright assasination attempts on Rev. Jones' life. The struggle to achieve social justice in the highest tradition of humanitarian Christiandom has been a stony path; but we have not shied away from these perils in its pursuit, confident that just causes can never be truly vanquished. We believe that our ideals and standards reflect the liberty and equality guaranteed in the Constitution of our nation, and that in fact the source of these difficulties over the years has almost invariably originated with fringe elements.

Yet in recent months, dating back to approximately a year ago, we have witnessed many disturbing occurences that we shall enumerate here, so you can gain a clearer perspective on our present situation:

-On November 7, 1976, the Peoples Temple hosted as its guest speaker Mrs. Unita Blackwell Wright, Mississippi's first Black woman Mayor. Much to our chagrin, members of our staff discovered two officials eavedropping outside the building with tape equipment. We were able to take their license number, and trace down the origin of the rented car, plus the identity of the two men from a distant state and their connections with a powerful legislator.

-We have noted that for a good many months our auditorium microphones are heard on the Temple telephone lines; and even on phones many blocks away.

-Active media harassment was initiated this past July, beginning in Rupert Murdoch's New West magazine, then picked up by the Hearst press (the San Francisco Examiner), and the San Francisco Chronicle, the area's largest circulation daily. This peaked recently in distortions and lies so outrageous, that we felt we had no recourse but to put the Examiner on notice of our intention to litigate.

-According to the sworn testimony of American Indian Movement leader Dennis Banks, he was approached by one Standard Oil employee who represented himself as working with agents of the Treasur Department and who, Banks alleges, proposed to him that he give false testimony against Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple church in exchange for favorable consideration of his extradition troubles; with the implicit threat that his refusal to cooperate would mean the intensified effort to extradite him back to (all but certain death in) South Dakota's prison system. This courageous man resisted the blackmail and in fact exposed it publicly. Efforts to step up his extradition proceedings have in fact intensified since that

time, involving the re-hearing of his Oregon case which had already been thrown out of court twice; and to the point of a "test case of challenge" by South Dakota, questioning the discretionary powers of all Governors regarding extradition, which would jeopardize a safeguard of liberty that this nation as a whole needs.

-Equally shocking is an INTERPOL directive aimed at completely destabilizing the Peoples Temple work in Guyana with vicious lies. We have the file number of this document, and substantiation of its involvement in attacks against the Peoples Temple by the press and by other agencies.

Regarding the involvement of INTERPOL, the reasons for these lies we do not know. Either these are deceivers or they are ruthlessly deceived. These lies are baseless. Perhaps you can empathize with what we have been going through, we saw what you had to endure when your good and loyal friend was smeared. In any event, we represent you well at our Guyanese project, you would be very proud of this American accomplishment in the third world. We are always praising you there, saying that the policies of your Administration are altogether different from your immediate predecessors. Of course you can check this out for yourself -- we are sure you have ways of doing this.

Now, regarding the agricultural project where our social security pensioners live, some enclosed literature will provide you with information about the development. It is not only a thriving, well-developed community (wells, refrigeration, electrical generators, streets, the beginnings of industry in saw mill, cassava processing, and furniture building from indigenous hardwoods), with an abundance of fresh food, excellent schooling for the children, and top medical care; but it is of especial interest to the Guyanese government as a pioneer project in experimental agriculture.

We have excellent relations with the Guyanese government, who has recently designated the Temple's development as a tourist spot through which to bring visiting foreign dignitaries. The Prime Minister is himself slated for a visit soon. Government officials are in and out of the project, and one who visited recently wrote in the guest book that this is a model community that should be emulated all over the world. The Minister of the Interior was so impressed with the project's excellent drainage system that he said it would be used as model for interior development all over the country. The Minister of Education was thrilled at our nursery and educational programs. This is only a sampling of the type of response we routinely receive.

The government personnel there has such confidence in our project that recently, for example, an Amerindian woman some ten miles from the project, in need of emergency hospital care was not only accomodated by a Guyana Defense Force plane, but two GDF men gave up their place on the plane to accomodate the project's doctor, to assist her until she could reach her destination in Georgetown.

That doctor (who received his medical education at church expense) and a professional health team maintain a rigorous schedule to provide the most meticulous monitoring of health. The same elderly and disabled people whose checks are now threatened with denial, receive: regular monitoring of blood sugar if they are, or have been diabetic; monitoring of blood pressure three times a day on both arms if they suffer from high blood pressure; special dietary consideration for obesity. In addition, the project's Clinic recently undertook a ROUND-THE-CLOCK CANCER DETECTION PROJECT, for one solid week, to give comprehensive testing to all the almost one thousand residents of the project, plus 200 people from the surrounding area (provided free to them). A total of six early-cancer cases were detected, and referred immediately for proper corrective treatment.

The medical team has also been amazed to report that: no-one at the project requires insulin any longer (numerous people were on insulin before); and that high blood pressure is routinely DOWN TO NORMAL WITHIN A MONTH'S TIME. Arthritis has also been subject to dramatic improvement. These people could have no better environment than the mild, sunny climate; abundant, fresh natural foods; and the release from the pressures of urban life. The vast improvements in health alone are testimony of the best of individualized,

concerned care. Indeed, every single morning a member of the medical team visits each senior's residence to inquire if they have had any problems during the night. They have beautiful individual cottages, help with landscaping and gardening if they desire, close access to the medical compound, entertainment and constructive activities in arts, crafts, sewing, classes in a wide range of subjects, and are indeed fully useful and accepted members of the community, something they keenly lacked in the cities of the United States from which they came.

We also consider this check cut-off ironic at best in that communities such as the Golden Rule in Willits, California, do take people's welfare checks as a means of supporting the collective body of people living there; whereas the Peoples Temple project in Guyana has no welfare checks, but rather provides goods, services, facilities, and activities that well exceed any benefit they could possibly have derived here in the U.S., even with welfare supplements!

Now there is a perspective from which to reconsider people who have hard-earned social security pensions, to which they are entitled living in Guyana. We are searching our souls to try to understand why H.E.W. and the U.S. Postal Service are attempting to withhold these benefits.

We have already called upon our local Congressman and our own legal staff to assist in investigating and rectifying this distressing abuse of citizens' rights, the withholding of U.S. mail, and specifically cutting off the means of subsistence for the elderly, blind and disabled, which is entirely contrary to every humane consideration on behalf of the affected individuals.

This is only the last of the series of abuses itemized earlier in the letter. Thus we appeal directly to you, Mr. President, to look into this hardship that law-abiding, even exemplary citizens are now suffering, for what reasons we do not understand.

We have no small measure of concern, either, that U.S.-Guyanese relations be strengthened, not torn down. Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Terence A. Todman's recent visit to Guyana in this regard was, we understand, most productive in building constructive and viable international relations. We also feel concern that the Guyanese government could stand to be disillusioned with America's human rights policies if they see the withholding of due benefits to disabled and elderly Americans who have taken up residence in their country.

And for our own part, we have no desire to see the United States discredited in the eyes of the Guyanese, to the contrary -- especially as we know this is not representative of our government at all, but is an abuse which we have every confidence will be speedily rectified.

Reverend Jim Jones and the entire congregation of the Peoples Temple Christian Church have great confidence in your Administration, and extend deepest thanks for your assistance.

Respectfully yours,

Laurie Efrein

(Ms.) Laurie Efrein,
Administrative Assistant

cc: Cyrus R. Vance, Secretary of State
Terence A. Todman, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs
Mervyn Dymally, Lieutenant Governor of the State of California
Joseph Califano, Secretary of Health, Education & Welfare
Benjamin Bailar, U.S. Postmaster General
Representative John Burton
Representative Phillip Burton
Mrs. Rosalynn Carter
Fred Young, Director SSA, San Francisco